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Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 under sections 28C, 28D and 36 related to the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The increased risk to United Nations staff resulting from malicious acts, natural disasters and other emergencies demands a proactive, comprehensive and coordinated ongoing support system for the survivors of such incidents, as well as families affected by the injury or death of a loved one in the service of the United Nations. On the basis of a detailed internal review of the current capacity of the United Nations to respond to such incidents, as well as the lessons learned from major incidents over the past seven years, the Secretary-General proposes to establish a dedicated Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management as an initial and crucial step for providing and coordinating the provision of essential support to survivors and the families of those who perish or are injured as a result of a malicious act, natural disaster or other emergency. Other support and assistance for survivors and affected families is being evaluated on the basis of experience and in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations common system to better meet the duty of care to those who serve and their families, and the findings will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly at the appropriate time.

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I. Background

1. United Nations personnel and properties have become the targets of increasing violence and malicious acts and have suffered from natural disasters. Considering the number of victims of malicious acts and natural disasters (see table 1) and taking into consideration lessons learned from the fatal incidents in Baghdad in 2003, Algiers in 2007, Kabul in 2009 and the most recent tragedy in Haiti, it is imperative for the Organization to put in place a proactive, comprehensive and coordinated system with central capacity to assist the United Nations duty stations, country offices and security management teams in enhancing preparedness for mass casualty events. Such capacity would ensure adequate systemic support in the event of injury to personnel or other trauma suffered as a result of malicious acts, natural disasters or other emergencies. The duty of care to United Nations personnel also extends to supporting their family members affected by such incidents. The proposal set out herein is an initial step towards addressing the lack of dedicated capacity and responds to the pressing need for policy development, coordination and support. The proposed Unit would work closely with Secretariat departments and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that provide direct support on the ground and at Headquarters in the immediate aftermath of malicious acts or natural disasters.

Table 1
Annual statistics on the number of victims of malicious acts and natural disasters

	Victims of malicious acts		
Year	*Civilian*	*Military*	*Victims of natural disasters (civilian and military)*
2003	22	4	—
2004	11	3	—
2005	11	22	—
2006	12	14	—
2007	34	8	—
2008	16	9	—
2009	14	11	—
2010	—	—	86 (as at 4 February 2010)
Total	**120**	**71**	**86**

Source: A/64/336, A/63/305 and Corr.1, A/62/324 and Corr.1, A/61/463, A/60/223 and Corr.1, A/59/332, A/58/344, and, for military figures, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations website (http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping).

2. Currently, no capacity or resources exist in the Secretariat to consistently address the spectrum of needs, including risk-based emergency preparedness, immediate response in the event of an incident or the provision of comprehensive and caring support to survivors and to families affected by the death or injury of a loved one. Where support is now provided to survivors and affected families, it is currently offered as an additional function by staff members who are primarily engaged in other roles and responsibilities in their functional units and many of whom are also engaged in ensuring business continuity in the affected area of operation. There is little continuity and no consistent contact point to address the

needs of survivors or affected families. This is particularly true in the medium and long term. Colleagues engaged in offering support are often untrained or inadequately equipped to navigate the complex administrative system they face in meeting the needs of the survivors and their families while also taking care of their day-to-day responsibilities. One of the most painful lessons of past tragedies is that affected survivors and their families, as well as bereaved families, have conveyed strong feelings of frustration and resentment as they try to work through complex bureaucratic procedures in a variety of offices and departments without dedicated and reliable assistance.

3. Furthermore, experience highlights the need for a coherent policy framework and coordinated preparedness and response during and after crisis situations. The Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) brings together the field-based organizations (field group)[1] with the goal of developing and establishing effective means of dealing with such crises, including standby arrangements and training for rapid response teams.

4. Current realities call for action to address the many emergency preparedness and support issues faced by survivors and family members in the wake of a natural disaster or malicious attack, including such emergencies as kidnapping or hostage-taking incidents. Organizational awareness of the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to meet its duty of care to staff and their families has grown over the past several years. Well-meaning efforts have been made to address some of the issues, but they have been ad hoc in nature. This has resulted in inconsistent treatment; a lack of policies and capacity to provide long-term systemic support; and the regrettable perception by a number of surviving staff and family members that the Organization has forgotten and abandoned them. Despite good-faith efforts and the best of intentions, such ad hoc support has proven to be unsatisfactory from the perspectives of both management and those whom the Organization seeks to assist.

5. In recognition of the extensive development and implementation work required to operationalize a comprehensive emergency preparedness and long-term support capability, the Secretary-General proposes to establish, as a critical and urgent step, an Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit to address, inter alia, the coordination of medical, psychological, welfare and administrative issues that surviving staff and affected family members face. Establishing the Unit entails the provision of additional resources in the form of eight new posts, which would be located in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, along with the related general operating resources.

II. Proposals

6. The proposed Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit would be placed under the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and would report to the Assistant Secretary-General.

[1] International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Population Fund, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization and United Nations Secretariat.

7. Given that the initial responsibility to address the impact of a crisis falls on precisely the entity that must re-establish itself and ensure continuity of operations and the delivery of mandates, the long-held belief that these entities cannot only recover from the event but take on effective survivor and family support without centralized mechanisms of assistance must be re-examined. The Unit would proactively provide support to and identify the capacity needed at various duty stations, country offices and security management teams to develop, implement, maintain and test emergency medical and mass casualty management plans and to develop, implement, coordinate and facilitate a comprehensive and ongoing support programme consisting of the following main elements:

(a) Risk-based preparedness: providing proactive assistance to United Nations duty stations, country offices and security management teams to develop, implement, maintain and test emergency medical and mass casualty management plans;

(b) Emergency response: in immediate response to an incident, supporting the deployment of the United Nations medical emergency response team and rapid response administrative personnel teams, which would identify and keep track of victims, coordinate and prioritize needs, including medical evacuation and psychological support, and work with local medical facilities to monitor the provision of medical and support services by those facilities;

(c) Post-emergency response:

(i) In the aftermath of an incident, serving as an initial point of contact for incident victims and their families and maintaining liaison with appropriate offices through the establishment of a round-the-clock call centre and the activation of a dedicated hotline offering support, advice and guidance on gaining access to benefits, interacting with the Pension Fund, the Advisory Board on Compensation Claims, insurance units and administrative and human resources offices, including the Office of Human Resources Management, on employment opportunities and possible avenues of humanitarian support; and in the medium to long term providing coordinated support to victims;

(ii) Working with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in developing a policy framework and promoting and institutionalizing policies and best practices in respect of support for victims and their families through the Human Resources Network; and

(iii) In the post-emergency response phase, coordinating the provision of long-term continuing support to survivors and affected families to ensure that they continue to receive the necessary attention and action to address their particular situations and needs, as well as reviewing relevant policies to ensure that they meet the needs of staff faced with such situations.

8. The primary outputs of the proposed Unit include the following:

(a) Improved preparedness at duty stations and country offices for responding to mass casualty incidents, including scenario planning and testing, as well as training of staff to provide immediate on-site response, in cooperation with relevant Secretariat and other United Nations entities;

(b) Coordinated support, where planning tools and templates would be disseminated to collate consistent and reliable information to enable United Nations duty stations to develop specific risk-based emergency preparedness plans;

(c) A centralized roster of stress counsellors and regional facilities available for initial response;

(d) Memorandums of understanding with emergency support organizations;

(e) Monitoring and provision of support for duty stations in the evaluation and testing of their emergency medical preparedness plans across all locations in collaboration with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

(f) Lists of available, trained standby response teams for deployment to areas as and where such incidents affecting United Nations staff occur;

(g) Continually updated lists of incident survivors and affected family members, maintained in coordination with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and relevant Secretariat departments and offices;

(h) Facilitation of timely and easily accessible support, advice and guidance for surviving victims and family members in coordination with Secretariat departments and offices and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

(i) Reliable availability of information and assistance to post-incident focal points for families and surviving victims, particularly in the medium and long term following a crisis;

(j) Formalized and comprehensive victim, survivor and family support strategies to address the special needs of women, the elderly, children of survivors and of the deceased and others with special needs;

(k) Training and briefing sessions for managers and staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, with respect to the provision of assistance to survivors and family members in the aftermath of natural disasters or malicious acts, including kidnapping and hostage-taking incidents;

(l) Coordinated efforts with other Secretariat and inter-agency groups responsible for examining and developing policies that affect survivors and family members (e.g. the High-level Committee on Management and Human Resources Network of CEB, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and Secretariat working groups on appendix D to the Staff Rules, which governs compensation in the event of death, injury or illness attributable to the performance of official duties);

(m) Handbooks and user-friendly guidelines containing policies having an impact on survivors and family members, including an emergency support toolkit and related standard operating procedures;

(n) Liaison with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and with Member States to keep track of and exchange information on ongoing work to assist surviving victims of malicious acts and natural disasters and other emergency survivors and their families;

(o) Communication tools such as e-rooms and websites where survivors and assigned focal points will be able to post information and hold discussions and that facilitate the updating of contact information, the sharing of information and the tracking of claims by survivors and family members and provide a means by which the Organization can communicate necessary information.

9. In order for the United Nations to respond in a compassionate and meaningful way to the needs of survivors and families of staff who have died as a result of

natural disasters, malicious attacks directed at the United Nations or other emergencies, other requirements associated with the provision of assistance and support must be considered. These include assistance related to education for dependent children and travel for families of the deceased and survivors to memorial ceremonies and funerals and to places of evacuation. These requirements are being evaluated more fully and will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly in a separate report at the appropriate time.

III. Resource requirements

10. Resource requirements for the proposals described above for the biennium 2010-2011 amount to $3,145,100 gross ($2,941,300 net). The costs associated with the proposals are summarized in tables 2 to 4, by expenditure component and budget section. Resource requirements include the proposed establishment of eight new posts (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 P-2 and 1 General Service (Other level)) for the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and other related general operating requirements. Of the proposed new posts, the P-5 and one of the P-4 posts would perform the functions of medical officers and will be located in the Medical Services Division, but will form part of the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit and therefore will report to both the Medical Director and the Chief of the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit.

Table 2

Resource requirements under sections 28C, Office of Human Resources Management, 28D, Office of Central Support Services, and 36, Staff assessment
Resource requirements by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Object of expenditure	*2010-2011 initial appropriation*	*Change*	*2010-2011 revised estimates*
Posts	101 105.3	1 369.5	102 474.8
Other staff costs	3 740.2	40.0	3 780.2
Consultants and experts	416.1	50.0	466.1
Travel of staff	843.6	281.4	1 125.0
Contractual services	38 489.5	453.0	38 942.5
General operating expenses	98 104.1	415.6	98 519.7
Hospitality	16.3	—	16.3
Supplies and materials	2 730.2	100.0	2 830.2
Furniture and equipment	1 598.0	231.8	1 829.8
Other	517 021.5	203.8	517 225.3
Total	**764 064.8**	**3 145.1**	**767 209.9**

Table 3
Resource requirements by budget section
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Budget section		*2010-2011 initial appropriation*	*Change*	*2010-2011 revised estimates*
28C.	Office of Human Resources Management	72 526.1	2 509.9	75 036.0
28D.	Office of Central Support Services	174 517.2	431.4	174 948.6
36.	Staff assessment	517 021.5	203.8	517 225.3
Total		**764 064.8**	**3 145.1**	**767 209.9**

Table 4
Post requirements by budget section
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Budget section		*2010-2011 initial appropriation*	*Change*	*2010-2011 revised estimates*
28C.	Office of Human Resources Management	177	8	185
Total		**177**	**8**	**185**

11. The delayed impact of the eight new posts requested in the present report for the biennium 2012-2013 is estimated at $1,070,500.

IV. Conclusion

12. Recent history demonstrates that United Nations personnel and properties are vulnerable to increasingly frequent malicious acts of violence and other emergencies. Furthermore, United Nations operations have suffered heavily as a result of natural disasters (most recently in Haiti), which have generated similar needs for staff. These vulnerabilities highlight the imperative to adjust the means by which the Organization meets its duty of care to those it puts in harm's way and those who otherwise confront disaster in the performance of their duties.

13. At present, the Organization has no arrangements in place to ensure systemic emergency preparedness and support for those who are affected by such emergencies or their families. However well-intentioned, any assistance provided during such incidents or in their aftermath in the past has been ad hoc and often insufficient, compounding the impact of the crisis. While a portion of the Organization's resources are devoted to preserving the safety and security of United Nations personnel and properties and mitigating security and safety risks, a systemic support system for United Nations personnel and the families affected by such crises is equally essential to meet the Organization's duty of care to all those who serve under the blue flag.

14. The proposals contained in the present report represent the first, essential steps in establishing a systemic means to meet effectively the Organization's duty of care to those who serve the United Nations and to their families by offering the most basic support and assistance in the face of the tragedy of loss of life, injury and other trauma.

V. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

15. **The General Assembly is requested to:**

(a) **Approve the present proposals of the Secretary-General to address the issue of support to victims of malicious acts against United Nations personnel, natural disasters and other emergency incidents;**

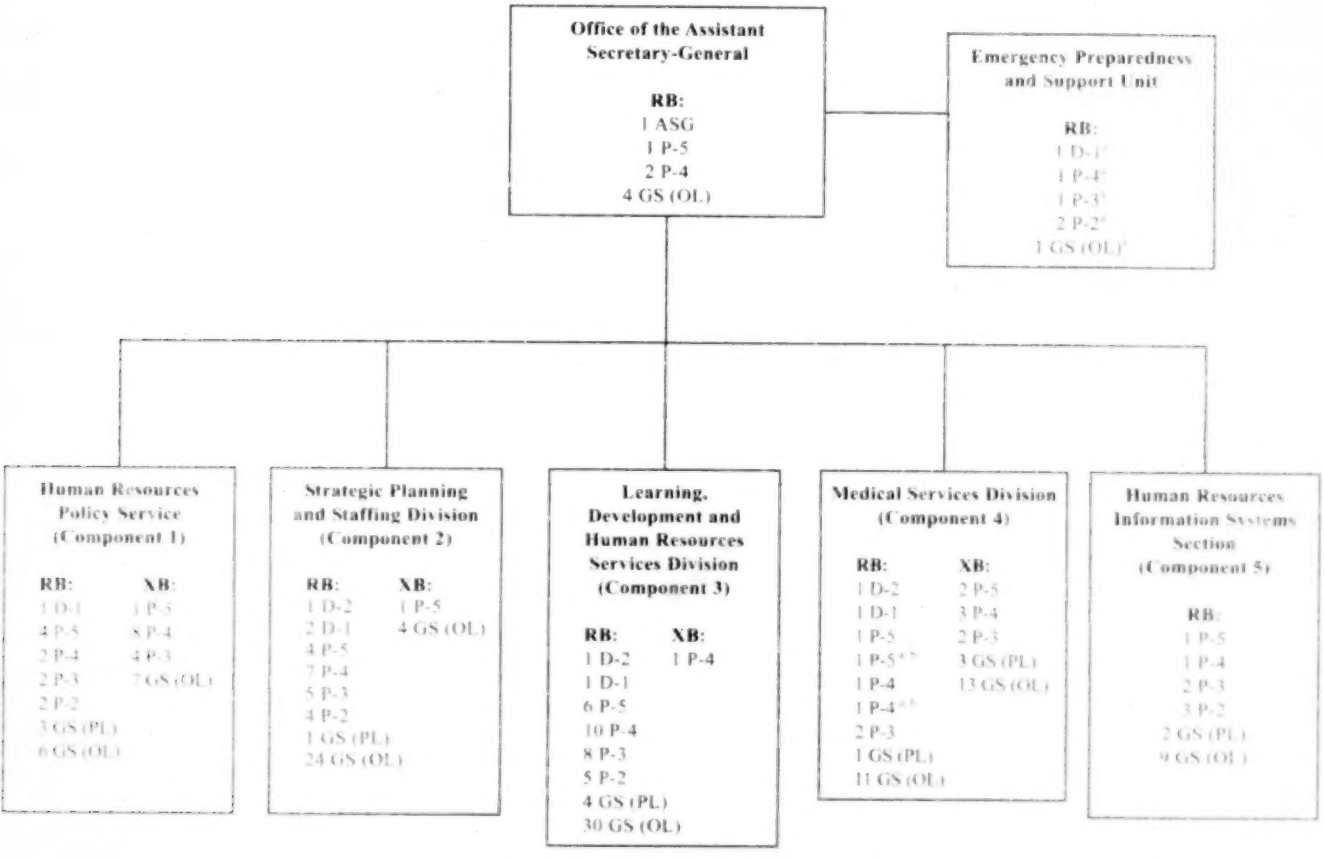
(b) **Approve the establishment of the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit and the related eight new posts;**

(c) **Appropriate an additional amount of $3,145,100 for the biennium 2010-2011 under section 28C, Office of Human Resources Management ($2,509,900); section 28D, Office of Central Support Services ($431,400); and section 36, Staff assessment ($203,800), to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.**

16. The amount of $3,145,100 would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

Office of Human Resources Management

Organizational structure and post distribution for the biennium 2010-2011



Abbreviations: RB: regular budget, XB: extrabudgetary, GS (PL): General Service (Principal level), GS (OL): General Service (Other level)

[a] New posts.

[b] While these posts would form part of the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit, they would report to the Medical Director as well as the Chief of the Unit.